



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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IM Weekly Highlights



- The IM received DHS 2009 grant awards that include a dispatch center upgrade, site infrastructure and equipment, training and exercises, and a Communications System Planner position.
- An IM amendment to the DHS 2008 grant received approval.

PSSB Highlights

- The U.S. Department of Justice reported to PSSB on Friday that the budget modification request for the 2007 COPS grant is approved. This approval will allow PSSB to further support distribution of radios to local jurisdictions, upgrade radios along the Northern Tier, provide IM project management and equipment support, and purchase up to 75 mobile data units for distribution through the MDT consortium.

Instructive Northern Tier Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

At the regular monthly meeting of the Northern Tier on Thurs., Dec. 4, Tom Smith, Interoperability Montana (IM) Project Manager, gave an update on the status of the Northern Tier microwave system based on a report from Harris-Stratex. He also gave the status report on Motorola accomplishments this past month. In addition, frequency and interference issues were discussed, with an emphasis on how they are being resolved.

Sheriff Wayne Dusterhoff, Glacier County, provided a comprehensive list of items that will be discussed at an upcoming meeting to address final acceptance of the Harris-Stratex microwave system. He also reported on the last IM Project Directors (IMPD) meeting and updated members on the MOU with PSSB and IM tax status issues. Issues regarding subscriber units and maintenance contracts were discussed.

Wing Spooner, PSSB, provided background information on the upcoming Border Interoperability Demonstration Project and solicited ideas for the grant. Jack Spillman outlined an innovative technological solution for providing low-speed data over both conventional and trunked radio systems.

The board approved a motion to support this mid-tier data system proposal, and named a sub-committee of three members to work on it.

The next meeting is Thurs., Jan. 7 at 9:00 am at the Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St., in Havre.

Informative IM Governance Committee

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Members of the IM Governance Committee held an informative meeting on Mon., Dec. 7 in Helena. Under action items, the committee approved an amended organizational chart and approved submitting an amendment for technical maintenance training as well as Blueprint for Excellence board training.

Bob Murdo, IM Legal Counsel, reported that the survey of XL Heights is complete and the rest of the acquisition process should be completed by the end of the month.

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The process of filing for a 501-C-4 IRS Status is underway. Kerry O'Connell reported for the Staffing Sub-Committee, indicating that it reviewed and approved two pending job descriptions.

In other business, members approved a recommendation to pay travel reimbursement for consortia members to attend six meetings per fiscal year. In addition, in the next fiscal year, the committee voted to recommend that IM Project Directors only meet in January, March, May and June, 2010.

Ian Marquand, Public Affairs and Outreach Consultant, gave a report on activities and members discussed ideas for sustainability. Bill Fleiner and Joe Brennenman are in the process of forming the IM Governmental Affairs Sub-Committee of elected officials.

The next meeting of the IMGC is set for Mon., Jan. 11, 2010 at the offices of Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd., in Helena.

IM Finance Committee Meeting Useful

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The IM Finance Sub-Committee met on Mon., Dec. 7 in Helena. Butte-Silver Bow Sheriff IM Finance Committee Chair John Walsh began the meeting with finance reports. Irene Bushnell,

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Anderson ZurMuehlen IM Account Representative, presented the IM check register, the monthly update of funding sources, and the latest IM budget, which members approved for presentation to the IM Project Directors.

Members learned that DES is taking care of the extension request for FY06 DHS funds. An extension request will be needed for the FY07 DHS grant to cover an exercise on the Northern Tier that is anticipated for the fall of 2010. Kevin Bruski indicated that draft letters are pending for the Eastern Tier award of repeaters. They have been ordered and are being shipped.

Mark Canton, Motorola, reported that sites are being turned on along the Northern Tier, which now produce wide-area coverage from Malta to the Idaho border. SOPs, flash upgrades, radio programming, fleet mapping and code plugs are all still pending. According to Mark, roughly six counties and two tribes are completely ready to go on the system.

Members were updated on the PSIC build-out schedule and an extension to the contract for the environmental firm that performs NEPA work for the project. Committee members learned about the environmental review process on the Belle Prairie site, where the Second Master Controller will be located. They also were informed about the status of a maintenance cost analysis project that Garrett Fawaz, Dept. of Corrections, is spearheading for the IM Project.

The next IM Finance Committee meeting will be Mon., Jan. 11, 2010 from 9:00 to noon at Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd., in Helena.

Effective IM Project Directors Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The IM Project Directors (IMPD) had an effective board meeting on Mon., Dec. 8 in Helena. Anne Kindness, Communication Center Manager for the City of Billings and Yellowstone County, provided an overview on the results of the city's recent radio needs assessment, and reported on the proposal that the City Administrator and City Council have decided to pursue. Kevin Bruski's IM Executive Director's report was reviewed, and IMPC Chair Alan Michaels gave a brief report on the Senior Advisory Council (SAC) meeting that took place the previous day. Mark Adams, Northrop Grumman, gave an update on the U.S. Air Force Remote Visual Assessment project.

Sheriff John Walsh reported on the IM Finance Committee meeting, while Irene Bushnell, Anderson ZurMuehlen, provided financial reports and the latest budget, which the board voted to

approve. In addition, the IMPD approved policy changes in travel reimbursements for consortia and IMPD meetings. IM Governance Chair Bill Fleiner gave the Dec. meeting report. The board approved the latest version of the organizational chart.

Ian Marquand, Public Affairs and Outreach Consultant, provided copies of the recently produced IM Build-Out Report and discussed distribution plans. Two additional outreach meetings are scheduled next month with Meagher County Commissioners and the Chippewa Cree Tribe.

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He is in the process of developing a White Paper for the fire community. The IM video is about 95% complete, and participants were able to watch it during the lunch break.

IMPD members received updates from the most recent IM Technical Committee meeting, with information on site development; the second master controller upgrade; Northern Tier fleet mapping, microwave status and trunking installations; and encryption issues. Brian Sewell, IM Project Manager, gave his monthly report on the MT National Guard contract, which is in the design stage and is on schedule.

Under new business, Sheriff Dusterhoff requested a generator on behalf of the Blackfeet Tribe, for use on the Divide Mountain site. Bill Fleiner reported on meetings related to site monitoring proposals.

The next IMPD meeting is set for Tues., Jan. 12, 2010, at the MACo offices, 2715 Skyview Drive, in Helena.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Dec. 16 (Wed.)**
Eastern Tier Consortium
Glendive • 10:00 am •
Law Enforcement Ctr., 440 Colorado Blvd.
- **Dec. 17 (Thurs.)**
I-15/90 Corridor Consortium
Butte • 10:00 am • Chamber Offices, 1000 George St.
- **Dec. 21 (Mon.)**
IM Technical Committee
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Large Conference Rm., 2715 Skyway Drive
- **Jan. 7 (Thurs.)**
Northern Tier Consortium (NTIC)
Havre • 9:00 am • Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St.
- **Jan. 8 (Fri.)**
Deadline for NACo Interoperable Communications Policy Forum applications. Visit <http://www.naco.org/interop> for details.